19: Howell & Thomson E, G-5 (1943-1944)1946
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Meanwhile the army of the *reth* was gathering below Aturwic, and the *reth*, dressed in white with a Mrs. Gray skin draped round him and five ivory bracelets on each arm, descended among them. Armed with millet stalks, they began to move slowly forwards in a threatening manner towards the army of Nyikang. When only a hundred yards separated them, a violent argument broke out about the bull, which should have been provided for the occasion to be tied down and walked over by the combatants (Note 21). Both parties retired and the *reth* went up on to the mound again, where he could be seen standing at the central entrance, a long millet stalk in his hand. Nyikang, Dak, and Cal retreated to a point just outside the shrine. After a long delay the bull was brought and placed between the two armies, who advanced, and the *reth* in front of his army walked forward to throw the first spear (millet stalk), which fell at the feet of Dak. Millet stalks began to fly, and in the general mêlée, the *reth* rushed forward with a small escort and wrested *nyakwer* from Nyikang, and hustled her away through the ranks of his warriors up to the mound behind them. Three furious counter-attacks followed by the Kwa Nyikwom, who dashed forward waving and whirling their ropes and whips. Finally, with Nyikang and Dak and Cal, at their head, they reached the bottom of the mound and went up to the huts on top. Shortly afterwards Nyikang and Dak descended from the mound. It was said that all hostility between Nyikang and the *reth* was now at an end, and that Nyikang had accepted him as his successor. Then they started on a tour of all the huts in Fashoda. This was considered an inspection of the houses, and those sections of Shilluk who are traditionally called upon to repair them were fined by Nyikang if they had not done so. The fines were one head of cattle each, and one chief was fined for initiating a song, the privilege of the Kwa Nyikwom. This part of the ceremonies was taken lightheartedly, and the victims subjected to much witticism.

Nyikang, Dak and Cal then retired to the shrine. They took no further part in the ceremonies and did not appear in public until

29:Dempsey M-5 (1940-1954) 1955
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difficult and weary travel, but they are hazy as to what kind of life is led in that country and suppose it to be but a continuation of the kind of life they know on this earth. Meanwhile the spirits which have not yet started on the journey to Pa Jwok hover round their graves and former homesteads and may do harm to their living relations, and a person who has died in enmity with anyone is greatly to be feared by his late enemy. All these spirits, therefore, have to be placated by offerings and sacrifices. Someone may be taken ill, and the anxious relatives call in the witch doctor to tell them which spirit is responsible for bringing this evil upon them. He consults his oracle, such as an empty calabash to which he listens intently, and then informs the people that Nyikang says such-and-such a one, recently dead, is responsible and that sacrifice and prayer must be offered to his spirit, and perhaps intercession and sacrifice is to be made at the grave of the sick person's dead father, that his spirit may prevail upon the malignant one to remove the curse from his family. Accordingly a sheep is led to the grave of the person to be placated. The right ear is cut off and washed in water and the water poured over the grave. Prayer is made both to God, Jwok-Atang (on such private occasions as this without the intercession of Nyikang), and to the dead person. Then the sheep is killed and the meat cooked. Some of the soup is poured over the grave and the meat is then eaten by those who have taken part in the sacrifice.

All former kings, and in some cases great chiefs, have their shrines. These shrines consist of two or three huts built in the usual Shilluk fashion but with much better thatching than that affected by the ordinary Shilluk and enclosed within a reed or thorn fence. As befitting the great spirit that dwells within, these shrines are kept in good repair and spotlessly clean by the duly appointed guardians. One such shrine is situated just a few hundred yards from the mission at Detwok. It consists of two large huts surrounded by a fence and is dedicated to Nyala, a woman, surprisingly enough. She was the daughter of the seventeenth